Issue- 111

HOT KEY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2001

IOW PC USER GROUP

Tim Bateman, sporting his latest hairstyle, pictured with Gwynn White at a recent meeting

At our most recent meeting, Tim Bateman co-ordinated the "Introduction to Internet Usage" session with his usual panache and flair. In spite of the Riverside Centre disallowing us to use their telephone line (apparently their switchboard is disabled after 5pm., owing to security problems and abuse of the telephone system) the event went smoothly and much knowledge was dispersed by the various speakers. Denny commenced the talks with a look at Napster, the online music centre that allows you to download any music of your choice. However, this practice is illegal now following on from a recent court case in the USA, where the various record companies sued Napster for breach of copywrite. Your editor then discussed various websites (see page 4) and then after the usual coffee break, David discussed Internet Newsgroups and Tim Bateman rounded off the evening with a discussion on the Investment Club that he is Chairman of. A pity that we couldn't access the Internet but the evening seemed to be enjoyed by all.

In This Issue

FUTURE MEETINGS

7th March	Spreadsheets	David Broughton
21st March	Workshop - Hardware Upgrades	Dennis Linzmaier
4th April	Microsoft Power Point	Doug Rankine
18th April	Latest Computer Products	To be advised
2nd May	Website Design	Alan Anthony
16th May	Developments in Computer Graphics	Bob Groom
6th June	Back to Basics	Dennis Linzmaier
20th June	Colossus & The Secret War	Albert Bareham
4th July	Using CD Rewriters & Software	Doug Rankine
18th July	World Online	To be announced

The election of a new Committee at our recent A.G.M

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USERGROUP- COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Honorary President:
Sir Norman Echlin,

Chairman:
Dennis Linzmaier,

Vice Chairman/Show Organiser:
David Broughton,

Treasurer:
Bob Groom,

Secretary:
Christine Jenkins

Membership Secretary/Marketing Manager:
Douglas Rankin

Hot Key Distribution & Refreshments:
Peter & Dorothy Wolletron

Hot Key Editor:
Brian Sexton

New Members Co-ordinator:
Maggie Butler

Meetings Reception:
John Atkin

Committee Member:
Ian Capon

Committee Member:
Marilyn Barrett

Computabilty Representative:
Cliff Maidment

Disability Resources Co-ordinator:
Helen Edom

EDITORIAL

The Internet and email facilities never cease to amaze and are full of interesting and informative knowledge to arrest the grey matter. Although the Internet can dish up some dubious and negative material, it still remains a comprehensive source of knowledge and wealth of information.

At our most recent meeting at the Riverside Centre, much interest was aroused by the various websites discussed and in reply to the demand by members, I am listing the sites that were mentioned in my talk on Internet Usage, especially for those who were not able to make the meeting.

Recommended Downloads

Web Ferret/Email Ferret -- download the latest version (v3.500)
http://www.ferretsoft.com

Diagnostic for your computer— PC Pitstop
http://www.pcpitstop.com

Problems solved on newsgroups
http://groups.google.com

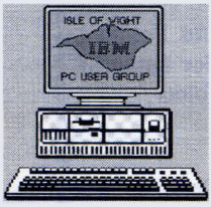
Windows 98 shutdown problem
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q238/0/96

Q273738 How to Troubleshoot Windows Millennium Edition Startup Problems
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q273/7/38.asp

Computer Shopper PC User Groups
http://www.shopperlabs.co.uk/clubscene

INTERNET QUOTE

"You know you've been spending too much time on the Internet when every colon appears as a pair of eyes: " E*rik (Generation Terrorists)*
http://quotations.about.com/arts/quotations/library/weekly/aa011399.htm



The Isle of Wight PC User Group

welcomes all owners and users of IBM Compatible Personal Computers.

It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and seek new information.

Our meetings are informal on the **first and third Wednesdays of each month at The Riverside Centre, Newport, 7.30-9.30 pm.**

The first Wednesday has usually a formal talk whilst the third Wednesday is more informal, geared to the new user and aims to help out members with specific problems.

Membership is £12 per year.

Visitors are welcome.

This journal, **HOTKEY,** is produced every month.

If you would like to know more about us, either come along to one of our meetings or contact one of our Committee Members on one of the numbers on page 3.

We're on the web :- **http://www.ddina.demon.co.uk/iwpcug/**

HUMOUR


off the mark
by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com
OK... WE GO OVER THIS AGAIN... LOCATE POINTY END OF SPEAR...
EARLY TECH SUPPORT
www.offthemark.com


off the mark
by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com
SELL! SELL! IT'S GOING TO COME CRASHING DOWN ANY MINUTE!
markparisi@aol.com
www.offthemark.com
JACK AND THE BEAN STOCK

THE DIGITAL CAMERA

In the last year or so I've been asked on several occasions questions like " What's the advantage of a Digital Camera? Should I buy a Digital Camera? What's the best Digital Camera to buy ?"

All these are more or less impossible questions to answer in a few words so here are some of the points to consider if you are thinking of venturing into Digital Photography.

The main question you need to ask yourself is " What do I want to do?" . Remember that at the present state of technology a Digital Camera(DC) is not a direct substitute for a film camera !

Comparing the two types , the following points are amongst those to be considered:-

1. DC's are much more expensive than 35mm film cameras(by at least 3 times)

2. They are (in most cases) bigger and heavier.

3. They have a very healthy appetite for battery power.

4. The Cards on which the pictures are stored are limited in capacity compared with film.

5.At the present time you can't take these storage cards into the local High Street shop for prints.

6. You would need quite a few relatively expensive cards (and batteries or charging facilities) for a 2 week holiday.

7. Prints from film have a far longer lasting quality than is currently available on home-produced digital prints. Real "photographic" prints can be made from digital files but they are expensive and not readily available.

8. For the real " photographer " the end result in terms of picture quality is nothing like as good as with film.

Very much better results would be obtained if you spent far less on a good 35mm camera and a film scanner. A £200 35mm camera and a £500 scanner would produce very much better pictures than a £3000 DC !

Now for the positive side !

1. Pictures from DC's are accessible and therefore usable almost immediately. As soon as you can get to a PC, you can see the results of your picture taking and if you have a colour printer, print out those that are of interest. There are a few printers on the market that will print out directly from the camera or the storage card without the use of a computer.

2. The picture files are again immediately available for putting on a Web site or attaching to an email.

3. Digital pictures can be " corrected " and "enhanced " on the computer to an extent that would be quite impossible in the Dark-Room.

4. The inks used in inkjet printers are getting better(and more expensive !) so that provided the prints are stored out of direct sunlight their life should be adequate for most purposes.

5.(and this is probably the reason for 90% of DC purchases) It's a new, gimmicky, fun

thing to play with !

Now, when deciding what sort of a DC to buy, you are back to the fundamental question "What do I want it for ?". The two most significant properties which categorise DCs and determine their picture quality and price are:-
"Resolution" and "Lens performance".

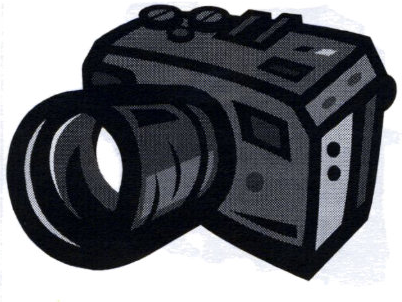
LENS. Here the choices are; fixed or variable (usually automatic) focus, fixed focal length or zoom, and does it have a "macro" setting for extreme close-ups.

Up to £200 or so you will get a fixed focus lens, which is OK for snapshots down to about 3 ft away (1M). £200-£300 will usually give Auto focussing and Macro which will give correctly focussed images down to perhaps 4-6 inches .

Above £300, some degree of Zoom will probably be included. The actual range of the zoom will depend on the price of the camera, but is commonly 3:1. Sometimes "Digital zoom" is included but ignore this as better results can be achieved by manipulation of the actual picture file.

Also important, of course, is the actual lens quality and this can only be determined by trial and error or by only buying a camera with a well-known make of lens.

RESOLUTION. This is an extremely involved subject which cannot be adequately covered in a few sentences, but for the sort of camera we are talking about this much- abused term gives a very misleading impression. What can be said, however, is that a camera with a higher so-called resolution will usually give a "sharper" picture, capable of being printed out larger, than one with a lower "resolution".



In real terms, the actual "resolving capability" of a DC is somewhat less than one quarter of the figure quoted in the specification, the other three-quarters of the "pixels" are developed by a process called "interpolation". (But that's a long, technical story !) The sharpness of the end product of a particular camera will depend on how well this interpolation is done by the camera "firmware" and cameras using the same CCD chip can give quite different results. So if possible you should try out a particular camera before buying

How much of this so-called RESOLUTION do you need ? For quite reasonable snapshots or for pictures for the Web or email, or for inclusion in small publications(like HotKey) almost anything will do. 1 million "pixels" is quite adequate. For good quality 6x4 inch prints and reasonable (if you're not too fussy) A4 prints you need to go for 2M pixels, and for good A4 and reasonable (ditto) A3 you will have to pay for 3M+. Past that point, it's a case of the more the better, and if you were in the advertising or glossy magazine business you would need to cough up £15000- £20000 to get a picture as good as I could get on my (a few years ago) £500 studio camera and a 50p sheet of film !!

But that's progress !!

Bob Groom

COMPUTER QUOTE

Technology is dominated by two types of people: those who understand what they do not manage, and those who manage what they do not understand.

Taken from Kerrie's Computer Quotes - **www.fn.net/~degood/quotes/computer.html**

A Second Dose of HTML

by David Broughton.

In my article on Web Page Design last June I dealt with some of the simpler bits of the HTML (HyperText Markup) language. I have been asked to write a sequel to that article so here is a second dose.

HTML, like most languages, can be used effectively after only a small introduction. One can "get by" with a kind of pidgin HTML. I dealt with many of these in my previous article so won't be repeating them here. If you can't get a back copy of the June 2000 edition of Hot Key I can send you a copy of the article by e-mail or on floppy disk. In that article I dealt with the main structure of an HTML document and some of the simpler ways to enhance text and add links. This article will go into more detail about text features.

Pictures are nice, but text is what carries the main information on your page so it is worth taking care over the presentation.

You can set the overall font type (or "face") by the use ofthe <BASEFONT> tag with the FACE attribute like this: <BASEFONT FACE="Arial, Helvetica">. This gives the browser an alternative. If the Arial font is not available, it can choose Helvetica. If you place this near to top of the body section of your page, all your text will be of this "face". It is wise not to choose unusual font faces as they may not be available. The default font face will be used in that case and that is user-determined.

You can change the size and face of smaller sections of text but bear in mind that the size of your text is relative to the size chosen by the user. There are five sizes, for example, with Microsoft Internet Explorer: Largest, Larger, Medium, Smaller and Smallest. You can still change the size of your text but it will only be relative to the size selected by the viewer. You do this with the <FONT> tag using the SIZE attribute. An increase in size can be +1 or +2 whilst a decrease is -1 and -2. For example, to increase the font size ofa word or sentence, use <FONT SIZE=+1> before and </FONT> after the word or sentence. Make sure you don't forget the </FONT> tag or everything after that will be larger than normal.

In a similar way you can change the face. For example:

<FONT FACE="Courier">

but remember the </FONT> tag after the changed section.

Colour is also important. You can set the background colour, the colour of your text and enhance individual parts of your text in a different colour for emphasis and other effects. Colours are specified either simply using names such as "red", "blue", etc, or can be specified in more detail using hexadecimal two-digit codes for each of the three primaries, red, green and blue in that order. The definition of "red" for example, in hexadecimal coding is "#FFO000". You can experiment to your heart's content with these colour codings.

To set the background colour you use the BODY tag that you should already have at the start of the body of your document.Add the BGCOLOR attribute like this:

<BODY BGCOLOR=#AAFFFF>

which will give you a sort of pale cyan

background colour. Note that "colour" everywhere is spelt the American way as "color".

To change the colour of some text use <FONT COLOR="red"> before and </FONT> to cancel it afterwards. If you want to set the overall general colour of text you can add the COLOR attribute in the <BASEFONT> tag like this: <BASEFONT COLOR="magenta">.

Justification of text at both margins is not possible with web pages but you can align paragraphs to the left or right. Use the paragraph tag, <P>, with the ALIGN attribute like this:

<P align=right>

to make the right hand margin align. The default is to make the left margin align. A new <P> tag (or </P>) will revert to left alignment.

Text can be centred with the <CENTER> tag. Note the American spelling again.This must be followed by </CENTER> to terminate the region being centred.

One of the difficult aspects of displaying text is the column width. Long lines of small text are deprecated because at the end of a line the eye finds it difficult to trace back to the start of the next line, But the page designer has a difficult choice to make because it is not known in advance what window or text size will be used by the user. Newspapers and magazines can use double or triple columns but this is no real solution when the user has to scroll down one column, only to have to scroll back up to the top of the next column.The medium of the web page is basically one long column of indefinite length.

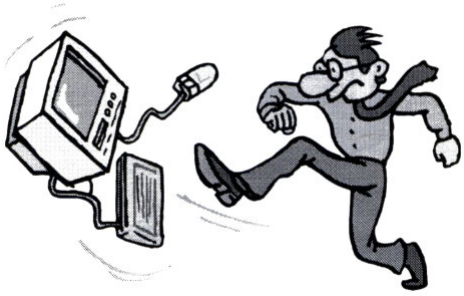
One solution is to use frames, as in the club's web site, but that is a bit advanced at

this stage. A simpler solution is to force the text into a narrower width using a table. The <TABLE> tag is quite complicated but for this simple illustration you can get by with <TABLE WIDTH=50%> to restrict the text to remain within 50% ofthe screen width. By default this will be at the left but you can centre it with <CENTER>.

I think that is all the space I'm going to get in this edition. Maybe I will continue with more features of HTML later. Meanwhile here is some advice for those who are happy to write their web pages in HTML: have a look at the source files of the club's web page to see what features of HTML are used to get the various effects. Although this advice should equally well apply to any other web site, you are unlikely to find the coding comprehensible as most sites are designed using dedicated software that has to try and make the page look exactly like the designer wants it and makes a big fuss over trying to do it. Simple sites like the club's should be more understandable.

You can see the source file by right clicking the frame you are interested in and selecting "View Source" and it will send the source to the Notepad program for viewing.

Club members are invited to e-mail me for more clarification on any HTML feature.



Starting Windows 95 and Windows 98 in Safe Mode

Safe Mode in Windows 95 and Windows 98 is a special operating mode in which only the mouse, keyboard, and standard VGA device drivers are loaded. This streamlined instance of the operating system makes Safe Mode useful for troubleshooting software installation and operation issues, local printing problems, video display issues, and general operating system performance.

Software that loads automatically in Windows 95 or Windows 98 can conflict with installing or running any software application. Starting Windows in Safe Mode temporarily disables potentially conflicting software and device drivers such as the CD-ROM driver, network drivers, and other items that automatically load during startup (e.g., the registry, Autoexec.bat file, screen savers, virus protection utilities, and applications in the Startup folder).

Using the F8 or Ctrl Key

To start Windows 95 in Safe Mode using the F8 key:

1. Choose Start > Shut Down > Restart the Computer.

2. When you see the message, "Starting Windows 95. . ." press the F8 key. (The "Starting Windows 95. . . " message appears on a black screen immediately before the Windows startup screen.)

3. Choose Safe Mode from the Windows startup menu. (Do not select Safe Mode with Network Support.)

4. Click OK in the Desktop dialog box that indicates Windows 95 is running in Safe Mode. If "Safe Mode" does not appear in each corner of the Desktop, repeat steps 1 through 3.

Note: On some systems, pressing the F8 key does not bring up the Windows startup menu. This could be caused by special startup values that are set in the Msdos.sys file, a read-only system file in the root of the computer's boot drive. This file contains an Options section that lets you tailor the startup process. For example, the BootDelay setting determines how quickly you must press F8 after the StartingWindows message appears. The default setting is 2 seconds (i.e., BootDelay=2). The BootKeys setting enables the startup option keys (F5, F8, etc.). However, if the value is set to 0, (i.e., BootKeys=0) the startup option keys will not function.

To start Windows 98 in Safe Mode using the Ctrl key:

1. Press the Ctrl key and choose Start > Shut Down > Restart the Computer.

2. Release the Ctrl key when you see the Desktop dialog box that indicates Windows 98 is running in Safe Mode.

Ed

COMPUTER QUOTE

"To me, the computer is just another tool. It's like a pen. You have to have a pen, and know penmanship, but neither will write the book for you."

Red Burns, interactive Telecommunications Program chairperson, New York University's Tisch School of Arts

What is the BIOS? -- A BIOS Mini-FAQ

Q: What is BIOS?

A: BIOS stands for Basic Input Output System.
All computer hardware has to work with software through an interface. The BIOS gives the computer a little built-in starter kit to run the rest of software from floppy disks (FDD) and hard disks (HDD). The BIOS is responsible for booting the computer by providing a basic set of instructions. It performs all the tasks that need to be done at start-up time: POST (Power-On Self Test, booting an operating system from FDD or HDD). Furthermore, it provides an interface to the underlying hardware for the operating system in the form of a library of interrupt handlers. For instance, each time a key is pressed, the CPU (Central Processing Unit) perform an interrupt to read that key. This is similar for other input/output devices (Serial and parallel ports, video cards, sound cards, hard disk controllers, etc...).

Q: Well, I see that the BIOS is necessary for the computer, but what can I do with it?

A: You can change hardware configurations that are stored in the CMOS, or Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor. To perform its tasks, the BIOS needs to know various parameters (hardware configuration). The CMOS power is supplied by a little battery, so its contents will not be lost after the PC is turned off. Therefore, there is a battery and a small RAM memory on board, which never (should...) lose its information. Your PC's performance can be highly affected by the CMOS settings. The reason for this is that the CMOS setup allows you to specify how fast your computer reads from memory, whether or not your cache is enabled or disabled, whether or not your CPU's cache is enabled or disabled, how fast your PCI bus communicates with its adaptor cards, plus a lot more. Additionally, the CMOS setup allows you to specify disk drive and memory configuration. In order for your hard drive to work with your system, it must be configured in the CMOS setup. The exception to that rule is SCSI drives with adaptor cards, as most have their own built in BIOS. Floppy drives can be setup in the CMOS as well; a: can be made to be b: in many systems, and other configuration options can be changed as well.

Q: Now that I know where to edit the CMOS options, how do I access this CMOS setup on my computer?

A: By entering a keystroke combination when the system is first booted. When the system is powered on, the BIOS will perform diagnostics and initialise system components, including the video system. (This is_ self- evident when the screen first flicks before the Video Card header is displayed). This is commonly referred as POST (Power-On Self Test). Afterwards, the computer will proceed its final boot-up stage by calling the operating system. Just before that, the user may interrupt to have access to SETUP. Usually, setup can be entered by pressing a special key combination (DEL, ESC, CTRL-ESC, or CTRL-ALT-ESC) at boot time (Some BIOS's allow you to enter setup at any time by pressing CTRL-ALT-ESC).

Excerpts for this FAQ taken from
John-Paul Rodrigue's BIOS Survival Guide.
(rodriguj@***.*********.ca)

Unofficially, USB Could Mean 'User's Super Buddy'

by Ken Fermoyle

With USB (Universal Serial Bus), a computer automatically recognizes the device connected and installs the appropriate drivers. It enables computer users to "hot- plug" computer peripherals to their PCs. ("Hot-plugging" means you can plug in and unplug peripherals without having to power down and then reboot your computer, no small benefit.)

Not that there weren't difficulties at first. I heard many complaints from people who tried to install USB ports and devices in the early days of the technology. The problems usually arose from trying to use USB in hardware or software systems that weren't ready for it; i.e. older systems that hadn't been built with USB compatibility in mind. I do not recall getting any similar complaints during the past year. Lack of USB devices was a problem at first but now they're everywhere.

USB offers many more benefits than simple installation.

First, USB (Version 1.1) can carry data at up to 12 megabits per second (Mbps), 100 times faster than any serial port. This broad category includes digital cameras, modems, keyboards, mice, printers, digital joysticks, some CD-ROM drives, tape and floppy drives, digital scanners and printers.

USB's data rate also accommodates a whole new generation of peripherals: MPEG-2 video-base products, data gloves, digitisers and computer-telephony, expected to be a big growth area for PCs and Macs. (In addition, USB provides an interface to such business-oriented technologies as Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) and digital PBXs.)

The latest version of USB, Version 2.0, introduced late in 2000, offers even faster communication, with a bandwidth up to 400 Mbps. It easily accommodates high-performance peripherals, such as monitors, video conferencing cameras, next-generation printers, and faster storage devices. Happily, USB 2.0 is backward-compatible with Version 1.1 Next, one or two USB ports can support many peripherals. In theory, up to 127 devices can be "daisy chained" from a single port. There are practical limitations, power supplies among them, and most of us will never use anywhere near that number. The ability to plug a USB hub into a USB port and then connect four or more peripherals to it is a real convenience. You can place a hub anywhere on your desktop for easy access: no more crawling under the desk to connect or disconnect a mouse, digital camera or any other USB-compatible device.

INTERNET NEWSGROUPS

-- A short talk given by David Broughton on Wednesday 21 February.

One of the most rewarding ways I haveused the Internet is by subscribing to newsgroups.

There seems to be quite a lot of confusion as to what newsgroups are. To start with they are not particularly about news. A better name would be "discussion group". They are also called Usenet Newsgroups.

What they are not: they are not e-mail lists like Onelist, eGroups or Yahoogroups. They differ from e-mail lists in significant ways and because they are often confused I shall start by emphasizing the differences.

Newsgroups are identified with a sequence of words separated with full stops but there is no "@" symbol as there is with e-mails. The words use are sequenced in an hierarchical manner, each word to the right being a subset of the subjects to the left. For example, uk. sci.astronomy is the subject of astronomy as a branch of science (sci) within the uk.

Although both provide for discussion and intercommunication, newsgroups are available to anyone on the internet without reference to any one authority. To subscribe to an e-mail list you must go through certain registration procedures with the organisation who has set up the e-mail list system. The discussion postings come to you as e-mails and you reply using e-mails. The persons allowed on to the e-mail list may be restricted. In our case, only paid up members may subscribe.

Newsgroups are different. They are not restricted to any class of person. Anyone can subscribe and there are hundreds of subject areas on all manner of topics.

When you subscribe to a newsgroup you don't need to tell anyone. There are noe - mails to send or approvals to get. You only tell your own computer.

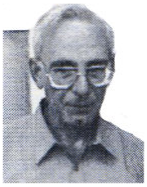
If you don't know what newsgroups exist, you need to get a list of them from your ISP. This is very easy and is one of the menu items provided on your e-mail software. Some ISPs do not carry all the newsgroups that exist so if you want a particularly specialist subject you will need to find an Internet Service Provider who does not restrict you, but this is not usually a problem.

You then tell your computer which newsgroups you would like to subscribe to. The next time you go on line, your software will access the latest set of postings to the newsgroup which you can read at your leisure offline. (In Outlook Express, if you hit "Synchronise All" in the Tools menu, you will send and receive all e-mails and newsgroup postings.)

When you want to reply or send a new posting, you have a choice of "Reply to the group", "Reply to the sender" and "New Post". It is not an e-mail, though it looks like one in many respects. The header information tells the internet software that it is a newsgroup posting and not an e-mail. It is sent first of all to your ISP who updates the postings for that newsgroup. Later, your ISP will communicate with all other ISPs to synchronise their lists of newsgroup postings worldwide so the next time to log on you will get the new postings sent by everyone else.

Another big difference between e-mail lists and newsgroups is the manner in which threads are handled. Threads are subjects and replies to a posting and replies to replies are listed together so that one can read them in logical order. This is a big difference from e-mail lists where quite often it is not at all clear what people are replying to, especially when the quoted text, if present, is relegated to the end. (There are no adverts in newsgroups, by the way, unless someone deliberately misuses the system.)

Continued on page 15



PRIZE PUZZLE FOR MARCH 2001

by David Broughton

As promised (or was it a threat!) the puzzle this month is a computer program puzzle. The puzzle is named ENIGMA3 and it is on the November cover disk CD-ROM (I told you not to throw it away!). (New members see below.)

When you place the disk in your CD-ROM drive you will probably get a start-up screen which is a bit of a problem on some computers. Click on EXIT and use Windows Explorer (NOT Internet Explorer). You start up Windows Explorer by right clicking on the Start button where you select "Explore". Scroll down to "HOTKEY| (D:)" and open up the "allpuz" folder (click on the + sign ifall the sub-folders are not there). One of the sub-folders is ENIGMA3. Double click this and the program ENIGMA3.COM shows up in the right hand pane. Either double click this to run the program from the CD-ROM or drag a copy to your desktop or wherever you want it and run it from your hard disk. (Use the right mouse button to drag. When you release the button, choose "Copy here", not "Create Shortcut Here" otherwise you will always need the CD-ROM in the drive to run the program.)

The program instructions are on the screen. The general scheme with all three ENIGMA programs is that you have a "black box" in which you can control the input to which the black box responds with an output. In this case the input and output are numbers. You have to discover what the black box is doing by testing it with input numbers and seeing what comes out. When you think you have discovered how the black box works you have to tell me what it would give as output if the input were the number 12345. Note that the black box has no memory; in other words, the output is not dependent on any previous input. Have a go and best of luck with that head scratching and I promise not to do any more ENIGMA programs!

Send your answer to me, David Broughton (see addresses on page 3) to arrive by Wednesday, 4th April 2001.

For members who have recently joined the club, contact me for a copy on floppy disk, or you can download the program from the club web site (www.ddina.demon.co.uk/iwpcug/). Find "Downloadable Binaries" in the left hand menu and take it from there.

ANSWER to the January Puzzle

You had to find the name of a month, a fish, an animal, a bird, a breed of dog, a day of the week and a flower from this string of letters, reading left to right and each word had to be more than four letters.

M A P G O C O K S T N E D L A R E I Y L

Nearly everyone got april, mackerel, moose, goose, poodle, Monday and aster. Actually, there are at least two trees in there that I could have asked for.

I received valid answers from Molly Mills, Peter Woollerton, Colin Boon, Clem Robertson and Ken Cameron. Ken Cameron was the lucky winner of the draw and received a £5 book token. A special mention must go to Peter Woollerton who sent me an amazingly long list of other words that he found there. Colin Boon did something similar. Well done all.

Continued from page 13

My experiences have been in the areas of mathematics, astronomy, cryptography, esperanto and humanism. Through newsgroups like these you can get access to the best expertise that is available because you can be sure some of the top people will be readers of the newsgroup.
This doesn't apply, of course, to some of the more trivial subjects. Useful subject areas are to do with health matters and help for the disabled plus advice on all manner of subjects from marital breakdown to incontinence support. There's lots on philosophy, religion and science subjects.

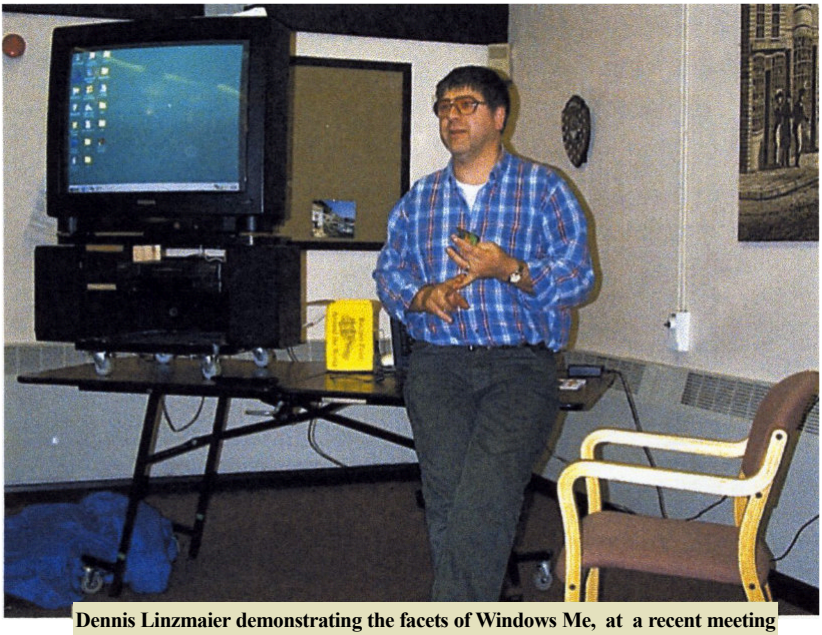
It is most satisfying to add to a discussion with one's own experiences and research results. Much scientific progress these days comes from newsgroup intercommunication between the leading scientists. New results are published there to establish a precedent. In many cases, the "news" of newsgroup lives up to its name and you can learn about an event before it reaches the general news media.

To give a specific example in the maths newsgroup; someone in Australia was at a remote astronomical observatory and did not have access to a library. He wanted a formula for calculating the area on a sphere bounded by two latitudes and two longitudes. I happened to know that formula and replied immediately to help him out. He was most grateful.

Some people have had bad experiences with some newsgroups because of abusive language and insults. It is true that some newsgroups suffer from this but they are not the really useful and interesting ones.

CONCLUSION

If you haven't yet ventured into Internet Newsgroups they are worth investigating. When you subscribe, go gently at first by reading a newsgroup's postings for two weeks before making any contributions of your own. This way you will get a feel for the general culture and the way it is run as every newsgroup is different. If you want advice on getting started, see me later.



Dennis Linzmaier demonstrating the facets of Windows Me, at a recent meeting

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